

West nyork

A United Offering.



“And when they had opened their
treasures they presented unto Him
===== GIFTS. =====

EPIPHANY, 1901.

90 Plymouth Avenue,
Rochester, N. Y.

My Dear Friends :

At this Epiphany Tide, our thoughts all turn to the wise men and their gifts, which they traveled so far to lay at the feet of their King ; and we are wondering what we can offer Him of gold, frankincense, or myrrh.

It seems as if our United Offering could not be touched at a better time, especially if we dwell upon the motive of our gift. It is not the message of one heart, but many who are longing to have a part in it.

There has been much written on the object of the United Offering, and since the idea was started in 1889, the amount has increased from \$2,183.39 to \$82,818.86. Each year the object has been a more interesting one, and as it has been more fully understood, more have united in it ; but those who have been privileged to be present at a Triennial Service and have partaken of the joy, have a grave responsibility in passing the message on. The influence of that day and hour can never be forgotten; and I long to touch the motive for our great Thanksgiving gift at this Epiphany Tide, this first week in the new Century. It is a glorious opportunity and privilege, as His children to present an offering to our King, and an *awful* and beautiful blessing will come to us as a united family in Christ if we begin this new Century by offering for His Kingdom, not only the gold so precious, but the frankincense and myrrh, so that in 1901 not only over \$82,000.00 will be laid upon the altar, but 82,000 of His children, young and old, will have a part in the great gift.

Now, the question is, what is each one of us going to do, that the joy may be shared ? What would it mean to the Church if, like Mary of old, we broke our precious box of ointment at His feet ? Would not the world be filled with a fragrance of holy living it had never known before ?

What would be a more beautiful tribute to our King than His children offering a United service,

co-operating with each other in loyalty, drawing out from each other the very best, because of loving, grateful hearts.

We who have been present at the Triennial Service when the gift is presented, and have had a part in the gift, can never forget it. The refrain of "Holy Offerings rich and rare, Offerings of praise and prayer," sung over and over, as it was in 1898 at the meeting in Washington, can still be heard. There were the gifts from the women and children of China, Japan, Africa and Alaska, from Indian and Negro from Montana and Florida, all laid on that alms-basin; and we were all one in spirit. That body of women felt the electric current of Divine love, and they were filled with a new power for His service. That alms-basin weighed down with gold and silver, and colored with all the purple and scarlet, the blue and green, the fine linen—all that was beautiful in needle work or pen or brush was presented; for each Diocese or Jurisdiction sent its offering in the most expressive and beautiful way. The Babies' Branch, always in the exquisite manner that would belong to those who loves His little ones. The heart of every woman was overflowing, and we touched each other, and forgot everything but His presence in it all.

This United Offering of 1898 has put in training or placed in the field already about 40 women workers. They are distributed among the Missionary districts and Diocese. Then there are three in China, two in Japan, one in Cuba, and one in Brazil. Who can estimate the good these, our substitutes, are doing in the battle field? Are we interested in each one—in any one woman? Are we reading the Spirit of Missions and following their work, touching their lives by a message of sympathy? Are we praying for them by name? Read Miss Osgood's letter from Woochang, and see what she is accomplishing in St. Hilda's School. Then learn to know brave Miss Lidstrom, so faithfully working in the Hospital at Skagway, Alaska. Then follow Miss Wall to Amori, Japan, where she has joined Miss Babcock. She is so full of her work, so earnest, so anxious to use the language. Did you ever make one of these women your personal friend? Begin this year to do

it, now. Take the *Spirit of Missions*, mark the place where her name is; interest your friend in her. If you cannot take the magazine for \$1.00, get one or two to take it with you; even four people can join, rather than lose the opportunity to have that message. It will unite your Society to take it in groups. It will unite your Parish to have the *Spirit of Missions* on every table; to talk over Missionary news, as well as the politics of the day. If they subscribe for a quarter, before the year's end they will want their own and give the dollar.

Everything that can unite the Parish, the Diocese, the Church, is worth working for, and a United Offering is a subject all will be interested in, if the motive is the highest and best, and fully understood. A united prayer rising from our hearts at that 12 o'clock hour every day, and one day all together for the United Offering, let us say Friday, for the woman who is praying for a United Offering is using the prayer of our Saviour, "That we may all be one," and we are nearer to Him and each other when our hearts are lifted up together with a prayer that He may be lifted up in the hearts of His children than when we stand side by side.

A united body of His saints, numbering young and old, offering their best, whether it be the mind or affections, labor or gold.

Just let us stop and think at this Epiphany Tide of our text: "And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts." Think of the treasures that are locked up that could be used for Him if the key was found to unlock them; the unused talents—the simple, quiet folk, the little children even, who would gladly lay their all at His feet if they knew it would be acceptable. The pen of the ready writer that could pass the message on and her pen become a weapon of power. The woman who thinks she cannot speak, whose tongue is unloosed because touched by Divine love—the hospitality that could yield such rich fruitage.

Your baby's box can have a "Thank God" put into it each Sunday. What could not this Thank Offering bring about if we with one cry asked of Him, "Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do." We

would choose for ourselves the gift, rather than have him work through us in His way. How often do we say as Christians, "Oh, if I had strength, how much I would do!" when our weakness may become a power for Him. We little dream that in hours of quietness we can offer frankincense richer than in the active, busy life. We need Marthas everywhere; but when we sit at His feet and quietly wait, He makes His presence felt.

The busy woman pleads, "If I were not so pressed with work, how willingly I would offer something." Yet those very duties she can make beautiful for Him, and while doing them, offer prayers that are truly heard and can be used for this Offering. The woman without gold is sure that if she had that gift she would offer it to Him. He does not want gold from her. Did you ever give the gold of some one else, and with it your own thanksgiving, and realize that the prayers and the alms go up together, and both are His?

How often the loving act in home and Church loses its beauty because not recognized as a gift for Him. We want to be faithful to these duties and to our pledges as a Parish, as a Diocese, for promises are sacred things; but the United Offering is a free will Offering over and above all others. It is the gift in which old and young all unite. It is the good measure, pressed down, the part that is running over; the twelve basketsful gathered up after all were filled, because God so richly blessed the offering of that little lad. In the *Good Shepherd Psalm* it is the cup of thanksgiving that is full and running over.

Let us see that no one in our Parish, in our Diocese, is left out, this new Century, of the privilege offering something, whether prayers or work, for it. The Babies' Branch surely teaches what can be accomplished by God's blessing upon a little seed; for in Baltimore, (1892), one little bag of chamois skin was laid in that alms-basin; in 1901, more than thirty Diocesan branches will have their United Offering. This is one thing which has helped the growth of the work—our many united efforts.

The Babies' Branch has a special outlook for the new Century, and are we going to lay strong founda-